

Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An encapsulated comestible material comprising:
at least one comestible particulate material; and
a coating composition applied to and encapsulating said at least one particulate material, said coating material comprising a plant-derived protein source, wherein said protein source is selected from the group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein derivatives, soy protein, and mixtures thereof.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Original) The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said at least one particulate material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.
4. (Original) The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said coating composition comprises from about 1-50% by weight of said protein source.
5. (Original) The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said coating composition comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.
6. (Currently Amended) A method of forming an encapsulated material comprising the steps of:
providing a film-forming solution comprising a plant-derived protein source, wherein said film-forming solution has a pH of less than 5;
coating at least one particulate comestible material with said film-forming solution; and
drying said film-forming solution on said at least one particulate comestible material thereby forming said encapsulated material.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said protein source is selected from the group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein derivatives, zein protein, soy protein, and mixtures thereof

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said at least one comestible material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said film-forming solution comprises from about 1-50% by weight of said protein source.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein said film-forming solution comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said film-forming solution comprises a solute selected from the group consisting of water, ethanol, acetic acid, hydrochloric acid, and mixtures thereof.

12. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said coating step comprises blending said particulate comestible material and said film-forming solution to form a homogeneous mixture.

13. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said drying step comprises vacuum drying, spray-drying, freeze-drying, oven-drying, or a combination thereof.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of feeding an animal or a human comprising:

feeding said animal or human a particulate material encapsulated with a film-forming composition comprising a plant-derived protein source,
wherein said protein source is selected from the group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein derivatives, soy protein, and mixtures thereof.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said particulate material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said film-forming composition comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said animal is a ruminant animal.